TEF Year Four provider submission

Provider Context

1.1 The College of Integrated Chinese Medicine (CICM) is the largest Acupuncture College in the country and was created in 1993. It delivers one course, a BSc in Acupuncture, which is validated by Kingston University (KU) and accredited by the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB).

1.2 The College has 2 intakes a year. The Spring intake, studies at weekends and the Autumn intake at weekdays (for reference classes are named according to the year and intake.

1.3 The College attracts mature students (77% of students are over 30 years) from around the the UK and the EU. It currently has 200 students, with typical class sizes of 25 students.

1.4 The College aims to provide an appropriate professional and academic qualification to standards laid down by the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB) and Kingston University.

1.5 The College is fully committed to a pedagogy that embraces self-study, as expected of an Institute of Higher Education, and in accordance with the requirements of the BAAB, QAA, OIA and Kingston University and to the frequent monitoring of the quality and nature of the College's learning and teaching environment by all those who work, advise and/or study at the College.

1.6 In 2016, the College had an inspection from both Kingston University and the BAAB. In 2018, it passed a QAA partial review and is now awaiting the final report, however the draft report states that all expectations are met and that:

Good practice
*The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice**.*

- *The responsiveness of the College to issues raised by students both formally and informally, which leads to the identification of opportunities for enhancement (Enhancement).*

Affirmation of action being taken

*The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions already being taken to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to students:*

- *the steps being taken by the College to ensure that the Quality Assurance Committee identifies enhancement priorities from the review of all the sources of data and feedback available to it, in particular through the annual monitoring process (Enhancement).*

Recommendations

The QAA review team did not make any recommendations.

1.7 The College also receives annual monitoring from both BAAB and KU. The Kingston review commended the college for the following:

- The excellent student experience, leading to well-qualified and confident graduates
- The quality of the documentation relating to assessment, in particular assessment briefs and personalised assessment feedback
- The subject team's adaptation of learning and teaching methods to suit different student learning styles
- The high level of student support which continues beyond graduation.

1.8 The British Acupuncture Accrediation Board (BAAB) gave 10 examples of effective practice:

- The College has a policy of staff acting as both Observers and Observees in the regular classroom observation requirement, and the learning from both roles is excellent as a mechanism for spreading good practice and encouraging critical self-reflection.
- Management of the large part-time teaching team, such as induction for new staff, support and appraisal, opportunities for progression, and transparency of college issues, such as sharing of the budget with staff, provides a strong sense of inclusion and community.
- The funding of nine members of staff to receive a teacher training qualification in 2015, who then shared their learning with the faculty.
- The staff have a strong and supportive relationship with students enabling them to be confident and critically engaged.
- The quality of the feedback given to students on their written coursework, and practical skills, which is individual, positive and helpful, and which is highly praised by the students.
- The Regional Support Groups, which are small groups with a tutor, based at a geographical location more convenient for the students, which meet about 10 times a year. This provides regular additional support for students in a range of skills and topics tailor-made to the student groups' needs and are highly valued by the students.
- The 'paired supervisor scheme' which offers additional perspective on each student's clinical progression. This enhances their range of experience and adds to the validity of assessment of practice. It allows supervisors to discuss both patients and students with each other, which encourages sharing of experience and problem solving.
- The support given to new Clinic Supervisors which includes a comprehensive body of written supporting materials as well as mentoring and team teaching.
- The assessment includes an essay at level 4 on which students receive formative feedback before the final submission; this enables students to fully understand the requirements of the assignment brief and the assessment criteria, and to develop their learning approaches and thus to achieve a good standard.
- There is a moderation process for examination scripts by which a sample of scripts are blind double–marked and moderated, before the rest of the scripts are marked. This is excellent to ensure fair standards of marking.

1.9 Every year KU reports an institutional risk assessment and each year the College is awarded a 'green' assessment, denoting the lowest risk assement that they award. Similarly, the BAAB annual monitoring reports consistently high standards.

Teaching Quality

Student Engagement

2.1 All College lecturers are also practitioners and therefore are able to give practical and current examples to support teaching, which is consistenly valued by all College students, and contributes to a stimulating learning environment. Many lecturers are also actively involved in research. Student attendance rates are high. From the NSS, 96.67% of students reported that staff are good at explaining things and 100% think that staff made the subject interesting. Both are well above the average (of 88.77% and 82.26% respectively).

2.2 The College maintains high achievement rates. In the last class that graduated 9.5% were awarded a 1st, 57.1% a 2.1 and 28.6% were awarded a 2.2. There was one 3rd and no fails. This is higher than Kingston's average.

2.3 We have high rates of progression into highly skilled employment/research with a core metric of 90.6%, which is in the top 10% of absolute performance.

Positive student feedback on teaching

2.4 Core metrics show that students are very satisfied with the teaching they receive. 96.67 of students completing the National Student Survey (NSS) in 2015/16 reported that they were satisfied with the teaching on their course, above the benchmark of 84.21%. Significantly, 100% of students confirmed that their course was intellectually stimulating, compared to a sector wide average of 84.89%.

Effective Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy

2.5 Effective teaching and learning contributes to high quality teaching reported earlier. A rigorous process is in place for assuring the quality of all teaching, learning and assessment, which is a combination of internal checks as well as procedures required by Kingston University and feedback from external examiners as well as other reporting to external bodies throughout the year. All staff are encouraged to undertake peer observation and are also required to follow an annual staff review and to submit a Personal Development Plan (PDP).

2.6 The effectiveness of the assessment is in part from the clear guidelines given to students. NSS data reported that 86.67% of students thought the criteria used in marking had been clear in advance, compared with 72.88% across the sector. Students work is assessed with individual comments as well as general class feedback whch picks up on feedback relevant to the class in general. Feedback is designed to not only show how marks were awarded, but is also used to inform each student of how to improve next time. 90% of students in the NSS reported that they had received helpful comments on their work, compared with an average of 73.89% across the sector.

2.7 Kingston University, in its Internal Subject Review in 2016 gave several commendations. One relating to the area of effective teaching and learning was their observation of "the subject team's adaptation of learning and teaching methods to suit different student learning styles".

Innovative approaches to teaching and learning

2.8 All students have access to Regional Support Groups (RSGs). RSGs are run once a month by regional support tutors in currently 12 locations throughout the country. These are free for students and provides a platform for them to meet students from others years and to discuss

any aspects of the course they wish, ranging from practising practical skills to discussing assessment and theory. This support has been recognised and commended as a system of good practice from Kingston University, BAAB and QAA in their latest inspections. CICM received a score of 88.89% for Academic support, compared to sector wide average of 79.58%.

Effective partnership with students

2.9 The College is constantly reviews its processes and teaching and asks students for feedback. Students are actively engaged in the management of the course. Two students sit on The College Board of Study and Joint Executive meetings with Kingston University. The College has 3 student reps meetings a year where all classes are represented. Actions from these meetings are sent to staff to action and this is then fedback to students. The College also has two student representatives who attend Governing Body meetings. Two students are also part of the Quality Assurance Committee.

2.10 Other forms of student engagement includes annual completion of the NSS and DLHE. This is supported by the NSS results that show 93.10% of students (compared with a sector average of 69.2% feel part of a community of staff and students and 100% of students feel that they have the right opportunities to work with other students as part of their course, compared to an everage for the sector of 84.1%). Overall 96.67% feel part of the learning community compared with an average of 76.55% for the sector.

2.11 93.33% of students reported in the NSS that they were able to contact a member of staff when they have needed to, compared to 79.58% across the sector. 78.95% of students reported in the NSS that the students' union effectively represents students' academic interests, compared with 56.47% as a sector average. In addition, 76.67% of students reported that "it is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on", with a sector wide comparison on 60.58%. Overall 96.67% of students felt part of a learning community, compared with 76.55%.

Students engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning

2.12 Students are positively engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning. There is a strong emphasis on self development and reflection, both in terms of assessment of modules but also with regard to the support students receive. The acupuncture accreditation body, the BAAB, reported in the major review in 2017, "The staff have a strong and supportive relationship with students enabling them to be confident and critically engaged".

2.13 Kingston University in its Internal Subject Review in 2016, commended the College for "the high level of student support which continues beyond graduation".

2.14 Student feedback indicates high levels of satisfaction with the academic support that they receive; encouraging students to think about the scholarship of teaching and learning in relation to their own practice is one component of this. Disadvantaged students, are offered additional learning support sessions to help them develop learning strategies, these are very well received by students.

Valuing Teaching

2.15 The College is fully committed to the ongoing development of all staff. At each staff meeting (3 per year), there is a review of the progress of each class. This provides an opportunity for all teachers to discuss any concerns that they may have about classes, share issues arising from teaching and assessment and to hear the views of other teachers.

2.16 The College continues to discuss and respond to student feedback at Executive Committee meetings throughout the year. The outcomes are discussed with programme leaders and staff as necessary. Any further development is also discussed at teacher development days which involve all staff. Peer observations of teaching which happens throughout the year

helps to share good practice, stimulate ideas and creativity of teaching and to assist with the personal development of teachers. Staff have reported that this has been very supportive and helpful in their teaching. Teachers then share their experiences of peer observation at staff development days.

2.17 The College staff review system gives programme leaders the responsibility for arranging and organising reviews for staff teaching on their programme. This allows them to have more of an oversight of the standard of teaching within their programme and allows greater opportunity to share good practice.

2.18 All teaching staff hold at least a Level 3 education and training in addition to being qualified and practising acupuncturists. All lecturers on the conventional medical sciences module also have relevant conventional medical clinical experience. More than 30% of lecturers have a second degree or PhD. The College appointed 4 new lecturers in 2017 and they completed a Level 3 education and training course in 2018.

2.19 In order to encourage teacher development, all teachers are elgible for a discount on any College Continuing Professional Development courses.

2.20 Students are regularly asked for feedback at various times in the course. Initially, in their first week they are asked for feedback on the recruitment process and induction. The College also asks for evaluation of the course at the start and at the end of each module, when they are asked for feedback on teaching, assessment, administration, resources and quality of teaching. The College asks all students for feedback on individual lecturers in unannounced surveys during a lecturer's class. Students often talk about the commitment and enthusiasm of College lecturers. The NSS results show that 90% of students believe that they receive helpful comments on their coursework, compared to 73.89% across the sector. Furthermore, 100% reported that staff have made the subject interesting, compared with 82.26% for the sector. The same percentage, 100% of students believe the course is intellectually stimulating compared with 84.89% for the sector.

2.21 The College has a vibrant, progressive, collegiate and committed teaching body supported by student feedback and the academic performance of students.

Rigour and Stretch

2.22 An effective course design and continual course development ensure students develop as independent learners and are stretched in terms of their knowledge, understanding and skills. Transparent procedures are implemented to monitor the rigor and stretch of the course. Each module on the course have clearly defined curriculum development plans which reflect the college's strategic plan. All major changes to the course are discussed at management level and again with Kingston University for final approval. Course amendments can come from student suggestion/feedback, lecturers/Programme Leaders, from the College accrediting body (BAAB), from external examiners or Kingston University.

2.23 The Joint Principal is the Chair of the Council for Heads of Acupuncture College's (CHAC) and a Board member of the BAAB's academic committee and on the Britsh Acupuncture Council Professional Standards Committee. All three organisations allow good practice to be discussed and shared at a sector level, across acupuncture colleges and adapted and implemented at the College as appropriate. The student's perception of rigour and stretch is supported by the NSS results where 90% of students believe that 'my course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth' compared with a sector average of 83.9% and further supported by the NSS result that 100% of students stated that 'my course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt' compared with 81.1% across the sector.

2.24 On a similarly positive note, core metrics illustrate that rates of progression into employment or further study, and progression into highly skilled employment or further study, are both considerably higher than the benchmark, further supporting the assessment that the validation/ revalidation process is effective and stretches students to meet their full potential. Support for students starts before they start their course. The learning support coordinator contacts all students with learning difficulties to offer support and to in form them about what is available. In addition all students are contacted by their personal tutor before they start the course. During their induction, students are introduced to the expectations of studying and have sessions about how to study and students' prefered learning styles, as well as introductions to using the library, accessing online journals and how to navigate the VLE. Students are offered additional sessions on study skills which are hugely popular after hours lessons.

Throughout their 3 years at the College they are also able to attend additional practical skills sessions and Regional Support sessions where they can receive support in very small groups, typically 4 to 6 students per tutor. NSS metrics show that student satisfaction with academic support is in the top 10% of absolute performance with 90.5%, compared with a benchmark of 81.7%. While the College is pleased with the result they are also not surprised as College lecturers, tutors and admin team work tirelessly to give each student the best experience possible.

2.25 All College students are mature. 47% of students enter with low or non tariff qualifications. The College spends considerable time getting to know each student, one of the the advantages of being a small college, and gearing the education to each individual. The collehe has a strong personal tutorial system and, as mentioned earlier, continuously seeks student feedback throughout the course. The College's own analysis reveals that students without a first degree before joining us are as likely to graduate from the College as those who already hold a degree. The College achieves excellent added value.

2.26 The College values the contribution that external examiners make in maintaining standards, providing feedback on assessment and advice from an objective perspective which helps to ensure student enhancement. The external examiners' reports regularly provide positive feedback, such as:

- Individual feedback to students is very comprehensive and supported in such a way to help the student to progress

- Feedback to students was extremely thorough and extensive which is to be commended

- Group feedback to students encompasses the common mistakes made by the majority but valuable to all. This is done to help students to gain a fuller understanding of the task and its requirements and to apply that to future assignments

- The assessments I have seen are wholly appropriate for the level of degree awards. I am very impressed with the assessment specticiation. These are crystal clear and invaluable to students

- The Warning Feature (Level 5) Examination is far reaching and relates directly to clinical reality and engenders safe practice

- In the Chinese Medicine Case History 3, as well as individual comments on the work submitted, the students were fed back in great detail in class, as a group, about errors in judgement. This provides an opportunity for reflection, discussion and learning from each other's mistakes

- Clear criteria and marking schemes together with student feedback sheets for both whole class and individual

- The double blind marking of a sample of the cohort for the Chinese Medicine Theory exam to test out and ensure consistency between the markers

- Some very interesting research questions for the dissertation likely to deepen our understanding of the practice of Chinese Medicine

2.27 External Examiner reports are reviewed by the Academic Director and Programme Leaders, the management committee and by Kingston University. The reports are scrutinised and actions planned are monitored accordingly.

Assessment and feedback

3.1 Assessment strategies are used to encourage a critical, enquiring, reflective and scholarly approach to learning. A commendation from Kingston University during their Internal Subject Review of the College in 2016 recognised “the subject team’s adaptation of learning and teaching methods to suit different student learning styles”.

3.2 Teaching and learning strategies which permeate the course are mostly process-based and use problem-solving and investigational work in a collaborative environment where the teacher acts as a coach and guide to facilitate student learning. Cross-level student interaction and peer observation reinforce this collaborative approach to learning and provide extensive opportunities for skills development.

3.3 The rigour, differentiation and balance of methods used is appropriate to the particular learning situation and the increasing breadth and depth of the learning programme as students take increasing levels of responsibility culminating in independent practice. Teaching, learning and assessment principles are designed to develop independent learning, safe and effective practice and good professional conduct.

3.4 Transitions and progression in the student learning journey are designed to provide increasing levels of responsibility and autonomy of thought and principled action. Introductory teaching blocks at the start of each Level enable students to make the transition, firstly into higher education at Level 4. Then from the theoretical, observational and skills foundations laid down at Level 4 to a focus on practicing, diagnosis and treatment planning at Level 5, with increasing levels of responsibility progressing to clinical practice under supervision at Level 6. During the Level 6 clinical part of the programme, students manage the care of a range of patients, taking increasing levels of responsibility for diagnosis and treatment until they are fully confident and competent in their independent decision-making.

3.5 The final clinical programme includes a significant amount of contact time focused on clinical practice in which students demonstrate high levels of responsibility and judgement giving them the opportunity to develop and enhance confidence and responsibility prior to graduation.

3.6 The curriculum is designed to take account of the expected variation in student’s knowledge base and in key and transferable skills competencies. At Level 4 students are guided within class in the development of study skills and by means of the ‘How to Study Handbook’. They also have provision for talks with personal tutors, learning support, tutor-led regional support groups in local areas, tutor-led college practice groups and taught sessions on different learning styles. Such support continues throughout a student’s progress to graduation as an autonomous practitioner.

3.7 The teaching of key and transferable skills is integrated into each module and is context related according to the six areas of professional values and principles described in the British Acupuncture Council's (BAcC) Standards of Practice for Acupuncture (SPA). These are Practice Context, Diagnosis and Treatment, Communication and Interaction, Safety, Professional Development and Business Management. As well as personal and professional qualities, practitioner values and attitudes (highlighted in the BAcC Standards of Education and Training for Acupuncture (SETAPs), the general transferable and key skills include numeracy, research, information literacy, management and leadership, creativity and problem solving. Time management and organisation skills are developed through the Professional Practice modules in which students independently organise a programme of external clinical observation.

3.8 Assessment outcomes are assessed and feedback is used to set targets for each student. This further engages students in their feedback and encourages students to learn effectively from the assessment process. Monthly Regional Support groups as well as regular personal tutorials and open access for students to all teachers, programme leaders and Executive Members means that further clarification and support is always on hand. Student assessment is discussed at Executive Committee meetings, which are held at 2 to 3 week intervals. Any action that is required to support students can be taken quickly and monitored regularly. Student satisfaction with assessment and feedback is high with core metrics showing that 80.83% of students are satisfied with assessment and feedback, more than 7% above the sector benchmark.

3.9 The NSS data shows that 86.67% of students believe that the marking criteria has been clear in advance. This is compared to 72.88% for the sector. Smilarly 90% of students stated that they have received helpful comments about their work, this is 26% above the sector average

3.10 There is only one area for assessment and feedback that is below average which is the comment that feedback is timely. All assessments have been returned within the 4 week turnaround that Kingston require us to adhere to. One module had a couple of assignments that were returned late due to the illness of the moderator. This has now been resolved and coursework has been returned on time so it hopes that next year students will recognise the timely returning on work.

3.11 Continuous assessment is a feature of the course. The main principles are that:

- Competence to practise at the point of registration is determined
- Formative and summative strategies will be used to demonstrate progression and integration of higher order intellectual and practical skills
- Integration of theory and reflective practice is promoted
- Students' self-assessment is encouraged

3.12 Level 6 provides opportunities for synoptic assessment which allow students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes from across a number of the vertical themes in the course. At Level 6 all students undertake a research project which allows them to explore in depth an area of chosen interest and demonstrate and apply the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course. The research skills developed while undertaking this project also provide a foundation for further research after graduation. The British Acupuncture Council Annual Conference provides a platform for the presentation of outstanding research projects and potential for publication is flagged.

3.13 Assessment types are varied and designed to help all students be prepared for employment (in the College's specific case this is self employment as an acupuncturist, as there are no employment opportunities as such) developing the skills, knowledge and confidence required to be highly skilled and safe acupuncturists as well as requiring them to meet the highest academic standards possible for each indivdual. The College's metrics indicate that graduates in the top 10% of absolute performers with 90.6% of graduates reporting feeling prepared for highly skilled employment or further study.

3.14 Assessment briefs and feedback support the development and attainment of higher order thinking skills which are constantly being recognised as examples of good practice by College external examiner reports and one recently reported that "Modules and creative assessments through each level of the course are well designed showing strong evidence of build in skills and knowledge over consecutive years ensuring continuity and ultimately preparing students for their professional role as practitioners".

Learning Environment

4.1 Resources are used effectively to aid students' learning and to develop independent study and research skills

4.2 The College operates from two beautiful Georgian grade II listed buildings in the centre of Reading with well equipped classrooms for either teaching or practical teaching and 16 treatment rooms which support the clinical phase of the course.

4.3 Students are encouraged to provide feedback on the availability and quality of resources throughout their programmes. The College noted that the NSS results in this area were below average. They recently outsourced their IT and have made significant changes to the College IT infrastructure with more reliable technology email system and excellent support for staff and students. They also invested in upgrading the Wifi access and continue to invest in the library. Fortunately Kingston University have replaced their VLE to Canvas from September 2017, which the College has access to. The old VLE was unweilding and difficult to navigate, Canvas provides an improved user interface experience, it is more intuitive and much easier to navigate. The College has invested significant time and money not just transferring resources from one system to the other and radically tailoring the design of the VLE to its purposes, but it is also strongly encouraging all students and staff to utilise the full functionality of Canvas, more than with the old VLE. This will take time but will allow students, especially the large number of students who travel long distances to study from a distance and access to a greater range of resources. The College believes that the NSS scores reflect students attitude towards the old VLE and at times the unreliability of its IT. Both of these issues have been resolved with a much improved VLE and a more reliable and effective IT system. The library is available to all students, but because most students travel for 1 to 4 hours to get to the College, it is difficult for them to visit the library as often as they might wish. However, with more and more resources and information being available on Canvas the College believes this will help all students to access the information they need.

4.4 Significant investment has also been made in digital resources. All classrooms have SMART whiteboards, a visualiser. The College has invested in a series of DVDs showing practical skills. This is all available on the VLE. The College has also given a copy of these and the more used resources to all students on a usb. They did this to help them with the transition from the old VLE to Canvas. Students also received free books of theory handouts and another book of practical skills to support those who are less confident using technology. The College wanted to ensure fair access to all students.

4.5 The College continues to invest in its teachers. Two members of staff from Dyslexia Action came to speak at a staff day and gave a very useful presentation about Dyslexia and recognizing and supporting dyslexic students. Staff were involved in an exercise to identify

key issues for dyslexic students studying at the college. In 2016 there has been a second workshop for staff during the staff day which focused on raising awareness of Dyslexia and Dyspraxia. This was as a result of Learning Support staff attending a British Dyslexia Association Training Day on Awareness of Dyslexia and Higher Education. Next year the College is planning a staff training session on mental health.

4.6 There has been positive feedback from students with dyslexia about the new system of flagging the dyslexia to markers, so that they are not criticised for language errors in their work. Dyslexic students going into the teaching clinic requested being able to use their iPads and laptops to help them with their note taking and this has been put into practice.

4.7 The Joint Principal attending the Council of Heads for Acupuncture Courses (CHAC) is now the Chair of the council. This council allows acupuncture colleges and university departments providing acupuncture to share good practice and develop the acupuncture teaching and learning. CHAC is the principal source in higher education of collective views on all matters relating to the provision and delivery of education for acupuncture professionals within the UK. It functions both as a collective voice representing acupuncture education and as a forum for debate and discussion between educational institutions. In these ways it aims to:

- Maintain and enhance the quality of acupuncture education provision
- Act as a forum for the exchange of information and for debate about issues of practice Communicate the Council's views in the wider arena
- Represent acupuncture and the provision of acupuncture education through collaboration with professional and statutory bodies, nationally and internationally, both within our own field and in allied fields
- Respond to changes in the acupuncture profession and wider developments in Oriental medicine and allied fields.

4.8 Clinical supervisors now have meetings 3 times per year at which discussions focused on how to encourage students to make clinical decisions, how to engage the clinical class when discussing patients and how to deal with different approaches of partner supervisors.

4.9 The College invests in resources and the quality of its teaching and puts much emphasis on sharing good practice and staff development. It is partly because of this investment that 96.67% of students say that staff are good at explaining things, 7% above the the sector average and this investment is the reason why 100% of students think that staff made the subject interesting and that 100% of staff think the course is intellectually stimulating.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

5.1 The College's inspection in 2016 by Kingston University, its validating university, concluded that the College provided an 'excellent student experience, leading to well-qualified and confident graduates'

5.2 The College's metrics show a revised continuation rate of 81.7% which includes deferrals as withdrawals from level 4 to 5 are generally zero. The College has been working on reducing the number of students that defer, by for example, being more stringent in recruitment procedures for students and by introducing a layer of the recruitment process with a telephone interview for all students. This is in addition to the current face to face interviews already given all applicants. The College also identifies all applicants with specific learning needs at interview and provides them with support and information before they start the

course. Personal tutors also contact applicants before the start of the first year. The college is also takng a more proactive role in identifying potentially struggling students. However, as the College only takes mature students the main reason students leave is financial difficulties, or changing personal circumstances such as illness or pregnancy.

5.3 However, withdrawals and deferrals both in level 5 and level 6 are consistently zero.

5.4 Students who have difficulties are identified as early as possible. At interview they are asked about any learning difficulties and this is communicated to the learning support manager who then contacts them about the documentation needed and about how get the help that they need. The nature of their difficulty is documented and communicated to other staff, for example, personal tutors, markers and lecturers as appropriate. In the first ek there is a session on learning support and they have a personal one to one tutorial within the first 3 months.

5.5 Independent study is vital to the students' learning and the library supplies a range of texts and journals, previous dissertations and reading files on specific subjects. Access to Kingston University library via iCAT is available via the VLE where there is access to a wide range of medical journals and scientific and medical databases.

5.6 A range of teaching and learning approaches are discussed and shared on staff development days and during teacher appraisals. For example, a member of staff shared how he incorporated sensory exercises into the teaching of various theoretical subjects which enhanced the students' learning and incorporated different learning styles. Reviews of clinical supervision occur on each staff day where various aspects of the styles of teaching involved in supervision are discussed.

5.7 In the clinic, students are taught self-appraisal which then leads to the planning of future learning. Reflective diaries are used weekly during the clinical and make up their reflective clinical journal and the reflection on practitioner development. Students keep weekly logs throughout the clinical to document point location and other practical skills.

5.8 Students learn that acupuncture demands a variety of research approaches in the research and reflective practice programme.

5.9 Student engagement and support is given in a variety of ways. Since the last re-accreditation the College Learning Support Co-ordinator has continued to look at ways to offer more support for students. Students have a number of face-to-face tutorials and scheduled email contacts each year.

	Face-to-face tutorials	Scheduled email tutorials
1st year	3	3
2nd year	1	2
3rd year	1	2
Clinical	3	-

5.10 Personal tutors are briefed on any problems within a class and on the schedule of assignments prior to a tutorial so these can be discussed with their students.

5.11 Student self-assessment and tutor report forms reflect the focus on providing a more formal midyear review of student progress with coursework and exam preparation and this includes a statement of specific actions to support a student.

5.12 The actions agreed emerge from a discussion between the tutor and student during the tutorial and put the emphasis on the student taking positive steps towards resolving any difficulties they are having with the course.

5.13 Additional personal tutors have been recruited from the new Practical Skills Tutors who have joined the College teaching staff.

5.14 The criteria used for assessment at all stages of learning is set down in the assessment specifications and marking grids. Very thorough moderation is carried out for all aspects of the course and double marking is used if one set of marking is thought to be problematic. Assessment practices are set down in the student Assessment and Monitoring Policy in the Student Handbook. There are a variety of clinical assessments that students must pass which are assessed by the clinical supervisor and a several that are assessed by a practical skills tutor. These are all documented in the Clinical Handbook. The clinical personal supervision sessions are used to discuss with students any concerns over fitness to practise.

5.15 Very thorough monitoring and evaluation is carried out by Kingston University and documented in reports such as KU ISR, Module Enhancement Plans (MEPs), Course Enhancement Plans (CEPs) and minutes from exam boards. Internal moderation ensures consistent standards and double marking is used in dissertation marking and other assignments if the marking is inconsistent.

5.16 Evidence for the educational component of the professional development of teachers can be seen in their PDPs and CVs. Various lecturers have been external examiners at other institutions and the Academic Director and a Programme Leader are external examiners for other acupuncture colleges.

5.17 Student attrition rate is also affected by standards of assessment, however failed assessments only account for a small proportion of deferrals. The anatomy exam in the first four months of level 4 often has resits and usually a couple of students will fail at this stage. They normally defer rather than withdraw. The level 4 end of year exam, particularly Chinese Medicine theory and point location, will also require some resit exams. Students normally pass the resit. At level 5 the pass rate is typically good as would be expected later in the course. Details of the results for these assessments for each cohort are kept in the module boxes.

5.18 Generally, of the students who give reasons for deferring their studies or leaving the course, by far the largest proportion report personal reasons for doing so which is unsurprising given the maturity of the cohorts. Other reasons given are typically health problems and maternity leave.

5.19 Information about what is expected of students at every stage of the course is included in the Student Handbook. The consequences of late submission of assignments is detailed to students in the Student Handbook in the section about submission of coursework.

5.20 Communications between teachers and the programme leader, module leaders and clinical supervisors are often conducted face-to-face particularly on clinic days and staff days or days when members of staff are in College teaching, however, due to the part-time nature of the College staff and their localities, it is also necessary to use emails to pass on information. It is the role of the programme leader to ensure that markers understand their roles and responsibilities in assessment, the criteria for assessments and the consistency with which they are expected to work. On teacher development days, markers have sessions to help clarify and improve marking.

5.21 Final degree results The degree results are consistently high with the majority of the class gaining a 2.1 or above. The marks for the last 8 years are shown below:

Class	1st	2.1	2.2	3	*Total*
14.2	2	12	6	1	*21*
14.1	3	10	9	0	*22*
13.2	1	14	9	2	*26*
13.1	1	13	7	0	*21*
12.2	5	12	7	4	*28*
12.1	1	5	4	0	*10*
11.2	2	12	10	0	*24*
11.1	0	9	6	0	*15*
10.2	2	13	9	1	*25*
10.1	3	12	6	0	*21*
09.2	0	18	11	1	*30*
09.1	4	13	9	1	*27*
08.2	3	19	7	0	*29*
08.2	1	12	0	0	*13*
07.2	3	10	7	1	*21*
07.1	1	11	4	1	*17*
06.2	1	17	7	0	*25*
06.1	4	16	6	0	*26*

5.22 Not only do College students gain high grades but they also have a very high level of (self) employment. All College students go on to be acupuncturists. They are well prepared by the course to achieve their academic and professional best, hence the outstanding rates of progression academically and into employment.

5.23 Core metrics show that 95.3% of graduates progressed into employment or further study and 90.6% into highly skilled employment or further study. This latter metricis in the top 10% of absolute performance.

5.24 Students spend considerable time preparing for employment. At level 4 they are required to carry out 15 hours of clinical observation, spending time observing a range of practitioners. They do this each year throughout the course. The course itself becomes progressively more focused on treating patients and setting up an acupuncture practice. As mentioned previously, all lecturers are also practising acupuncturists, so students have access to a range of people who have set up and run successfsul practices. Students have several business skills lectures which cover topics from the law, finance, marketing, organisation, and establishing a digital presence, among other topics. They also have a ‘setting up in practice’ assignment. At level 6 students spend 6 months in clinical practice, treating patients in the College teaching clinic and supervised closely by experienced acupuncturists. The ratio is four students to one supervisor.

5.25 Over this time students build a close relationship with their supervisors and learn invaluable practical skills. Once students have completed their 6 months in clinic they enter their ‘prequalifying practice’ stage which allows them to treat outside the clinic and have more autonomy in the way they treat – at the same time they are still the under supervision of their supervisor. The College also encourages all graduates to stay in touch, particularly in the first year and the teaching staff and supervisiors spend time supporting graduates. The College also organises graduate days, inviting recent graduates back to College in their first year in a structured follow up day. Students benefit greatly from this support from the College, but also from each other.